

The perfect place to work

Lead-in

1 Work in pairs. Look at the following features of a particular workplace. Discuss which you think are positive features, and explain why. Can you think of any disadvantages?

- special ergonomic chairs
- glass walls to divide the space
- people's pet dogs
- free meals in the cafeteria
- trolleys bringing food round
- a laundry
- sports facilities, including a swimming pool
- video games
- medical staff
- massage service
- bikes and electric scooters
- electric cars
- a place to have a nap

2 Do you have any of these features in your workplace? Which would you value most? Are there any other features of your own workplace that are important to you?

Input

1 Read the article. Can you guess which company it is?

██████████ employs more than 24,000 people and a large number of them work at the huge ██████████ site near San Francisco, California. ██████████ is renowned for looking after its employees well and for its fun and interesting approach to the workplace. As a result some critics claim employees are pampered. See what you think ...

When you start at ██████████, one of the first places you'll go is to the on-campus ergonomic centre in order to be fitted with a special ergonomic chair. ██████████ arranges the workstations so that groups of three to four employees who work together sit in the same area. The architect decided to do away with the traditional office. Instead, glass walls were used to divide the space into groups with the intention of cutting down on much of the background noise inside the office. It also allows sunlight into the entire office. Employees can personalise their workstations as much as they like, and even bring dogs (but not cats) to work if they want to.

One of the most often cited perks of working at ██████████ is the food. ██████████ feeds its employees well. If you work at the ██████████, you can eat breakfast, lunch and dinner free of charge. That's why employees complain that they put on weight when they first join the company! Too tired to walk to the cafeteria? Staff with trolleys bring food around throughout the day. But what if an employee spills some of that free food on his or her clothes? ██████████ has laundry facilities including a dry cleaning service available to employees on site.

There are also sports facilities available with a view to working off all those calories. Employees can head over to the gym or play a quick game of ping-pong or table football. There is also a swimming pool, with lifeguards on duty to keep employees safe and video games for employees who prefer to exercise their thumbs. If an employee suffers an injury or feels ill while at work, there are medical staff at the [REDACTED]. For a small fee, you can even try out a massage.

How do you get around such an enormous site? No problem. For shorter journeys within the [REDACTED], there are bikes and electric scooters parked around campus so that people can get around quickly. Just pick up a scooter, travel where you want to go and leave it. For longer journeys, [REDACTED] keeps a fleet of electric cars, which employees are allowed to borrow for several hours each day.

And if all these perks are a little bit too much for you, don't worry. There are even 'energy pods' where employees can catch up on their sleep so as to recover from all the perks, if they wish. Pampered? Maybe ...

2 Do you think you would like to work at this company? Why / Why not?

Language focus

1 Match the multiword verbs from the article (1–10) to their meanings (a–j).

- | | | |
|----------------|-------|---|
| 1 look after | ..... | a go in the direction of |
| 2 do away with | ..... | b reduce the quantity used |
| 3 cut down on | ..... | c take care of |
| 4 put on | ..... | d do something you haven't had time for |
| 5 work off | ..... | e add, especially weight |
| 6 head over to | ..... | f collect |
| 7 try out | ..... | g dispose of, get rid of |
| 8 get around | ..... | h experiment, test |
| 9 pick up | ..... | i move from one place to another |
| 10 catch up on | ..... | j reduce through exercise |

2 Work in pairs. Look through the article again and find at least one expression for giving reasons in each paragraph. Can you think of any other expressions used for giving reasons?

3 Use the expressions from 2 to complete the sentences. Several answers are possible.

- 1 We've bought an expensive new coffee machine staff can have a good cup of coffee.
- 2 The offices have been completely renovated. they were looking old and unattractive.
- 3 The old meeting room has been turned into a gym encouraging staff to do more exercise.
- 4 The last company I worked at had an awful canteen and most people went out at lunch time.
- 5 We've opened a crèche at work make life easier for employees with children.
- 6 The company will have to consider making redundancies financial problems.

Task

1 You are going to design the perfect space in which to work or study. Think about the following:

- the space (light, noise, chair, decoration)
- who you work with
- food options available
- other facilities nearby
- transport facilities
- other special features

2 Present your ideas to the class.

3 Describe one feature from someone else's work space which you particularly liked and explain why.

Review
